

What is a Comprehensive Master Plan?

A comprehensive master plan consists of a study of existing area conditions and a discussion of future trends, goals, and objectives. Comprehensive plans deal with land-use issues such as land-use patterns, zoning and housing stock; population, roadways, and other infrastructure are usually the principle elements that are studied. In some cases, educational facilities along with recreation and other government facilities are also reviewed.

For the City of Baltimore, the Comprehensive Master Plan is the culminating effort of the planning process. The document is official in nature, meaning that city government should adopt it into local law. Upon adoption, the Plan is to be used as a policy guide for decisions concerning the development of the city.

Why is a Comprehensive Master Plan important to Baltimore City?

Baltimore City has been without a Comprehensive Master Plan for thirty-four years. Because of this there has been no formal and holistic direction for land use, economic development, educational enhancement, and quality of life initiatives. The Plan offers support to the City's efforts to leverage investment, policy and programming to maximize economic opportunity and the quality of life for all citizens of Baltimore over the next six years.

Who is conducting the planning process?

The Planning Commission, with the help of its staff in the Baltimore City Department of Planning, is spearheading the Comprehensive Master Plan efforts. The Commission approached the CMP as Baltimore City's business plan in an effort to build on the tremendous success of an effort known as "PlanBaltimore" in the late 1990s. PlanBaltimore involved thousands of residents in creating a vision for the future of Baltimore City. While it was not formally adopted, it created the framework for what Baltimoreans want their city to be. The Comprehensive Master Plan has updated this vision and focused on the implementation steps needed to make the vision a reality.

What are the stages that will lead to the Plan's adoption?

Community and stakeholder input is paramount for the Plan's success. Now that a draft is complete, the Planning Commission will host nine district meetings to present the Plan to the community and get their feedback. Residents will also have an opportunity to provide input via the Plan's dedicated website, LIVEEARNPLAYLEARN.com. Once the meetings have concluded, the Plan will then be revised to reflect the comments received and presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption.

What's the timeline for implementation?

The draft will be released for public comment on February 2nd. The nine community forums will begin on February 21st and run through April 1st. The Planning Commission is expected to adopt the Plan on April 20th. It will then be submitted to the City Council for ratification in mid-July.

How can interested parties participate in the process?

The Planning Commission is striving for maximum community involvement. It has scheduled one community forum in each of the nine planning districts in Baltimore City. At the forums participants will be given an opportunity to talk to Planning Department staff first-hand and offer suggestions for improving the Plan. It is of the utmost importance to the Planning Commission that the Plan reflect community concerns. The participation of Baltimore's diverse community is essential.

How can colleges and universities become part of the Plan?

Baltimore's colleges and universities are an important part of the Comprehensive Master Plan. Our institutions of higher learning are an especially integral component to improving the way Baltimore LEARNs. Students, faculty, staff and administrators can participate by:

- Posting fliers on campus.
- Integrating the CMP in geography, government policy, urban planning courses and other classes focusing on Baltimore City.
- Providing links to LIVEEARNPLAYLEARN.com through newsletters and blogs.
- Announcing upcoming CMP events at group meetings.
- Attending the district meeting nearest you.